

companies as well. It would help create a shared economic development, greatly needed in the current times of turmoil.

Most notably the proposals have been welcomed by a diversity of groups both in Ireland and the United States. Dr. John Alderdice, leader of the Alliance Party believes that the bill could "help underpin political agreement." His voice is joined by Hon. Dr. Joe Hendron, MP, member of Social Democratic and Labour Party [SDLP], who stated that such an incentive could help "bring a new day to Northern Ireland." Hon. Cecil Walker, MP, member of the Ulster Unionist Party [UUP] has also lent his support, believing the bill to be "one of the most promising economic development proposals on the horizon for my beleaguered part of Northern Ireland." In addition, Fr. Sean McManus of the Irish National Caucus, Inc. in Washington, DC, Senator Sean Maloney and Senator Patrick McGowan of the Republic of Ireland, have all welcomed this trade free zone legislation.

Importantly, the proposals are aimed at improving the most economically disadvantaged regions of the North of Ireland, through the condition that only articles grown, produced, or manufactured in such areas will qualify for this proposal duty-free treatment. Those employers who seek to take advantage of the incentive must also be in compliance with the principles of economic justice dealing with fair employment, namely the MacBride Principles.

The widespread enthusiasm for the trade free zone among the parties of Northern Ireland and many others, is indeed proof that agreement can be reached, if the Government of the United States, Britain, and the Republic of Ireland are willing to take advantage of the opportunity H.R. 3599 provides. Although the arduous path of political compromise and solution has yet to be forthcoming in Northern Ireland today, increased economic prosperity in the region would help lay the foundation of goodwill and trust, which are required now more than ever.

#### UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD SAUDI ARABIA

HON. JIM KOLBE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 1, 1996

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I found this article by Mr. David Dunford in the Tucson Citizen to

provide an illuminating analysis of the United States policy toward Saudi Arabia. I commend it to your attention:

[From the Tucson Citizen, June 28, 1996]

UNITED STATES ASKS TOO MUCH OF SAUDIS,  
WHO SACRIFICE PEACE AT HOME

(By David J. Dunford)

Tuesday's terrorist bombing in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 Americans and wounded hundreds of others, forces us to focus again on our critical relationship with Saudi Arabia.

It is critical because Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil producer and the United States is the world's largest oil consumer. It is critical because Saudi Arabia is the most important of the Arabian peninsula monarchies and provides the major platform from which we project our military forces to defend against Iraqi and Iranian threats to our interests.

Since the successful end of the 1990-91 Gulf War, our policy toward this part of the world has been on automatic pilot. We look to Saudi Arabia to take a forthright stand in favor of the Middle East peace process and we look to Saudi Arabia to provide assistance to the Palestinians and the Bosnians which our Congress refuses to provide. We also look to Saudi Arabia to buy our civilian and military airplanes and our telecommunications equipment. Although we pledged in 1990 that as soon as the crisis was over, we would leave, almost six years later we still have 5,000 U.S. Air Force personnel in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government pays their expenses.

What we have failed to recognize is that Saudi Arabia has changed and, as a result, the Saudi monarchy may no longer be able to respond to the multiple demands that we place on it. Gone are the days when Saudi Arabia had \$150 billion in foreign exchange reserves and the ability to buy social peace by providing employment and subsidized government services for all.

Saudi Arabia today, with its rapid population growth, educated but underemployed youth, and chronic budget deficits, provides fertile ground for Islamic militants.

While we may not know for some time who was responsible for Tuesday's bombing, it is likely that it was related to the bombing of the American military advisory compound in Riyadh in November, which killed five Americans. The message the militants seek to send by this latest terrorist act is that the Saudi government's beheading last month of four of their number convicted of involvement in the November incident has not weakened their strength or resolve.

Ironically, it may well be that some of the militants are so-called "Afghans"—Arabs

who trained to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan in a program supported by both the Saudi and U.S. governments. The militants oppose modernization, Westernization and Arab reconciliation with Israel. They are particularly indignant that, despite tens of billions of dollars spent on sophisticated weaponry, the Saudi government was forced in 1990 to rely on "infidel" troops to defend their land, which includes the two holiest places in Islam—Mecca and Medina.

The first step in fixing our Saudi policy is to confirm an ambassador and send him to Riyadh. King Fahd's recent illness and his decision to relinquish power temporarily to Crown Prince Abdullah have raised uncertainty about who is really in charge. It is particularly important to have an ambassador on the ground to monitor this situation.

During my four years as deputy ambassador in Saudi Arabia, I was acting ambassador for 15 months. Since I left more than four years ago, there has been an ambassador in Riyadh for less than half of that time. It should hardly surprise us that there was no ambassador on the ground when the truck bomb exploded on Tuesday.

Second, we should reduce our reliance on Saudi help financing our national security policy and we should be more judicious about pressing the Saudis to take public positions that incur the wrath of a substantial percentage of Saudi citizens. The Saudi government needs a reprieve to turn its attention to domestic economic and political priorities.

Third, we need to devise an end game for our Iraq policy. We must not withdraw our forces in Saudi Arabia under the duress of terrorism but, at the same time, policy drift is not a good reason to leave them there indefinitely.

Finally, we need to be more proactive in our encouragement of needed economic and political change in Saudi Arabia and in neighboring monarchies. Change is hard and Gulf rulers will not always welcome our injection of internal issues into diplomatic exchanges. That should not deter us.

Their survival and the maintenance of our vital interests in the region depend on orderly change.